

FIRST PRINCIPLES

BY

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NEW YORK
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY

1897

PREFACE TO THE FOURTH EDITION.

To the first edition of this work there should have been prefixed a definite indication of its origin; and the misapprehensions that have arisen in the absence of such indication, ought before now to have shown me the need for supplying it.

Though reference was made in a note on the first page of the original preface, to certain Essays entitled "Progress: its Law and Cause," and "Transcendental Physiology," as containing generalizations which were to be elaborated in the "System of Philosophy" there set forth in programme, yet the dates of these Essays were not given; nor was there any indication of their cardinal importance as containing, in a brief form, the general Theory of Evolution. No clear evidence to the contrary standing in the way, there has been very generally uttered and accepted the belief that this work, and the works following it, originated after, and resulted from, the special doctrine contained in Mr. Darwin's *Origin of Species*.

The Essay on "Progress: its Law and Cause," coextensive in the theory it contains with Chapters XV., XVI., XVII., and XX. in Part II. of this work, was first published in the *Westminster Review* for April, 1857; and the Essay in which is briefly set forth the general truth elaborated in Chapter XIX., originally appeared, under the title of "The Ultimate Laws of Physiology," in the *National Review* for October, 1857. Further, I may point out that in the first

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edition of the *Principles of Psychology*, published in July, 1855, mental phenomena are interpreted entirely from the evolution point of view; and the words used in the titles of sundry chapters, imply the presence, at that date, of ideas more widely applied in the *Essays* just named. As the first edition of *The Origin of Species* did not make its appearance till October, 1859, it is manifest that the theory set forth in this work and its successors, had an origin independent of, and prior to, that which is commonly assumed to have initiated it.

The distinctness of origin might, indeed, have been inferred from the work itself, which deals with Evolution at large—Inorganic, Organic, and Super-organic—in terms of Matter and Motion; and touches but briefly on those particular processes so luminously exhibited by Mr. Darwin. In § 159 only (p. 447), when illustrating the law of “The Multiplication of Effects,” as universally displayed, have I had occasion to refer to the doctrine set forth in the *Origin of Species* pointing out that the general cause I had previously assigned for the production of divergent varieties of organisms, would not suffice to account for all the facts without that special cause disclosed by Mr. Darwin. The absence of this passage would, of course, leave a serious gap in the general argument; but the remainder of the work would stand exactly as it now does.

I do not make this explanation in the belief that the prevailing misapprehension will thereby soon be rectified; for I am conscious that, once having become current, wrong beliefs of this kind long persist—all disproofs notwithstanding. Nevertheless, I yield to the suggestion that unless I state the facts as they stand, I shall continue to countenance the misapprehension, and cannot expect it to cease.

With the exception of unimportant changes in one of the notes, and some typographical corrections, the text of

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this edition is identical with that of the last. I have, however, added an Appendix dealing with certain criticisms that have been passed upon the general formula of Evolution, and upon the philosophical doctrine which precedes it.

May, 1880.